Geography Policy 2026

St John Vianney Primary School

Geography Policy

Being SJV

Sincere † Joyful † Virtuous

Vision

At St John Vianney Catholic Primary School, we believe that geography is an essential part of everyday life and a subject through which children learn to make sense of the world around them.

We want every child to develop a positive and confident attitude towards geography and to understand that everyone can be successful in this subject. We believe that with appropriate teaching, practice, encouragement and support, all pupils can make meaningful progress.

Our geography curriculum is ambitious for every child. We aim to ensure that pupils develop secure geographical knowledge and understanding as well as opening up opportunities for potential future careers in the industry.

Intent

At St John Vianney Primary School we are committed to providing all children with a broad and balanced geography curriculum. This policy sets out a framework within which teaching and non-teaching staff can work, and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. It has been developed through a process of consultation with school staff and governors.

Geography is an essential part of the curriculum. It provides a means of exploring, appreciating and understanding the world, and our locality in which we live and how it has evolved. Here at St John Vianney, we take pride in ensuring our pupils learn first and foremost about the Geography of our local area (Blackpool) and appreciate the unique physical and human features of the Fylde Coast.

Geography explores the relationship between the Earth and its people through the study of place, space and environment. It contributes to the cultural, social, spiritual and moral life of children as they acquire knowledge of a range of different cultures and traditions, and learn tolerance and understanding of other people and environments. Geography is the subject in which pupils learn the skills of understanding a locality and how and where people fit into its overall structure.

Developing geographical skills is essential as children live in a world that is wide open to them. With opportunities to travel and work in different cities and countries across the world, pupils need to be able to efficiently use maps, charts and other geographical data. The opportunities for the children to carry out geographical enquiry are also of value.

The teaching of geography would be difficult without acknowledging the future of our planet. Our geography Curriculum places great importance on the interaction between the physical and the human environment. Many areas of study give opportunities to make children aware of these effects upon their surroundings, their own responsibilities and how they can contribute to improving the environment, however small that

contribution might be. As a Catholic School, we strive to follow the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Pope's wish for us to care for our common home, as detailed in his encyclical, Laudato Si.

In addition, oracy sits at the heart of teaching and learning at St John Vianney. Through purposeful discussion, high-quality modelling and rich language experiences, children learn to speak like a Geographer with confidence, listen attentively and communicate their ideas clearly. We place great importance on developing vocabulary so that children can understand, articulate and express increasingly complex ideas in both spoken and written forms.

By the time children leave St John Vianney, they will be able to think and talk like a Geographer, communicating their ideas confidently, using technical and appropriate vocabulary.

Curriculum Aims

By the end of primary school, pupils will:

- develop contextual knowledge of the location of globally significant places – both terrestrial and marine – including their defining physical and human characteristics and how these provide a geographical context for understanding the actions of processes.
- understand the processes that give rise to key physical and human geographical features of the world, how these are interdependent and how they bring about spatial variation and change over time are competent in the geographical skills needed to:
- collect, analyse and communicate with a range of data gathered through experiences of fieldwork that deepen their understanding of geographical processes
- interpret a range of sources of geographical information, including maps, diagrams, globes, aerial photographs and Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
- communicate geographical information in a variety of ways, including through maps, numerical and quantitative skills and writing at length.

Key stage 1 Pupils should develop knowledge about the world, the United Kingdom and their locality (Blackpool). They should understand basic subject-specific vocabulary relating to human and physical geography and begin to use geographical skills, including first-hand observation, to enhance their locational awareness.

Key Stage 2 Pupils should extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the local area to include the United Kingdom and Europe, North and South America. This will include the location and characteristics of a range of the world's most significant human and physical features. They should develop their use of geographical knowledge, understanding and skills to enhance their locational and place knowledge.

Implementation

At St John Vianney's we are guided by the National Curriculum as the basis for our curriculum planning in geography. We ensure that there are opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and we build planned progression into the scheme of work, which incorporates the wonder of our own locality so that the children are increasingly challenged as they move up through the school. As Blackpool, our local area, is a coastal town, we will take opportunities to explore the range of human and physical features on our doorstep. At the beginning of each new year, there will be a key skills overview of geography for the year stuck into each exercise book. This will include topic titles, key knowledge, skills and vocabulary to be taught and learned. At the end of each topic, teachers will make individual assessments of their pupils knowledge and understanding and upload these to the centralised spreadsheet so that progress can be tracked, measured and monitored across year groups.

Curriculum Structure

Our geography curriculum has been mapped out to ensure clear progression of skills and knowledge through each year group. We have worked hard to create a bespoke Geography curriculum, ensuring we cover the key knowledge and skills from the National Curriculum, as well as helping our children to engage with the Geography of Blackpool.

Early Years Foundation Stage

At St John Vianney's, we pride ourselves in immersing all our learners in the world around them, specifically beginning with our locality. In the EYFS we ensure our learners have the opportunities to explore and make sense of their local environment, beginning with our school, the surroundings of our neighbouring streets and Blackpool as a town. Our children have the chance to take part in local guided walks to become familiar with our area to help their understanding about the place we live.

For our Nursery aged children their Geography learning will link in with their Mathematics:

- Understand position through words alone.
- Describe a familiar route.
- Discuss routes and locations, using words like 'in front of' and 'behind'.

It will also link in with 'Understanding the World':

- Use all their senses in hands-on exploration of natural materials.

• Begin to understand the need to respect and care for the natural environment and all living things.

• Know that there are different countries in the world and talk about the differences they have experienced or seen in photos.

In Reception, the children will link their Geographical learning with 'Understanding about the world' through:

- Draw information from a simple map.

- Recognise some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries.
- Explore the natural world around them.
- Recognise some environments that are different to the one in which they live.

Teaching and Learning

Teachers use a range of teaching approaches to ensure all pupils can succeed, including:

- Direct instruction and modelling.
- Collaborative learning and discussion.
- Practical, hands-on activities.
- Problem-solving opportunities.
- Independent exploration and enquiry.
- Retrieval practice and regular revisiting of key knowledge.
- Opportunities for reflection and evaluation.

Resources

Pupils have access to a range of practical resources to help in the teaching and learning of Geography, including:

- Maps – Google Maps and Ordnance Survey Maps.
- Age-appropriate Atlases available for all year groups.
- Compasses to help in the teaching and learning of position and direction.
- Key linked texts across school to aid the teaching and learning of each topic.

All resources are audited on a yearly basis to ensure our children and staff have access to the best quality resources to help them in the curriculum.

Inclusion

SEND

At St John Vianney Primary School, teachers adapt their practice according to pupils' needs while maintaining high expectations.

Adaptations may include:

- additional modelling;
- concrete resources;
- pictorial representations;
- stem sentences;
- vocabulary support;

- pre-teaching;
- additional guided practice;
- targeted questioning;
- carefully selected examples;
- additional processing time;
- small-group teaching;
- appropriate adult support.

Adaptation should remove barriers to learning rather than unnecessarily reducing geographical ambition.

Pupils with SEND are taught within the geography curriculum wherever possible and are supported to develop increasing independence.

Teachers work with the SENDCo and other professionals where appropriate to understand pupils' needs and identify effective strategies.

Disadvantaged Pupils

We are committed to ensuring that pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium funding have equal access to the geography curriculum.

Every pupil is entitled to a high-quality geography education regardless of their background, starting point, gender, disability, race, religion or socio-economic circumstances.

We recognise that pupils may have different starting points and experiences of geography.

Teachers therefore use assessment to identify barriers and provide appropriate support so that pupils can access the same ambitious curriculum.

Particular attention is given to pupils who may have experienced gaps in learning or limited opportunities to develop their knowledge of the world around them through experiences outside school.

Higher Attaining Pupils

Challenge is provided through deepening understanding, rather than simply accelerating pupils onto content from a higher year group.

Pupils who demonstrate secure understanding may be challenged through:

- reasoning;
- explaining and justifying;
- multiple representations;
- identifying errors;
- making connections;
- generalising;
- investigating patterns;
- solving unfamiliar problems;
- proving or disproving statements.

Teachers consider whether pupils have genuinely secured the intended learning before moving them towards greater depth.

Enrichment

We seek to inspire pupils beyond the classroom through a range of enrichment opportunities, which may include:

- Extra-curricular trips.
- Visiting our local area to learn more about the key human and physical features of Blackpool.

Impact

The impact of our geography curriculum will be clearly shown in how the children view and understand the world around them, starting from the most local viewpoint and branching out from there.

Our children enjoy and value geography and know why they are doing things, not just how. Children will understand and appreciate the value of geography in the context of their personal wellbeing and the creative and cultural industries and their many career opportunities. Progress in geography is demonstrated through regularly reviewing and scrutinising children's work to ensure that progression of skills is taking place. This will be evident through:

• Looking at pupils' work, especially over time as they gain skills and knowledge;

• Observing how they perform in lessons;

• Talking to them about what they know.

The geography curriculum will contribute to children's personal development in creativity, independence, judgement and self-reflection. This would be seen in them being able to talk confidently about their work and sharing their work with others. Progress will be shown through outcomes and pupil discussions for all children. The geography ambassadors will help in this process.

Assessment and Monitoring

The impact of the curriculum is evaluated through:

At least termly, the geography subject leader and/or SLT will:

• Monitor children's geography to check the whole-school approach to the teaching of geography (as outlined in this policy) is being followed;

• Carry out learning walks to monitor lessons and relevant displays;

• Sit with children and look through their geography books and speak to them about their work (pupil voice).

- The subject leader will meet at least termly with the Geography year group ambassadors to check on teaching and learning and provide the ambassadors with checklists to complete in relation to displays, key texts and resources.

Following on from any monitoring that is carried out, feedback is provided to staff. Any areas that require improvement are discussed with staff, with support offered (where necessary) and steps for moving forward agreed.
